

# IPSOS BEYOND THE BUBBLE

Spring Statement Briefing

March 2025

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Ipsos

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# TODAY'S SESSION

1. The Mood of the Nation
2. The Economics
3. The Politics
4. The Insider View
5. Discussion





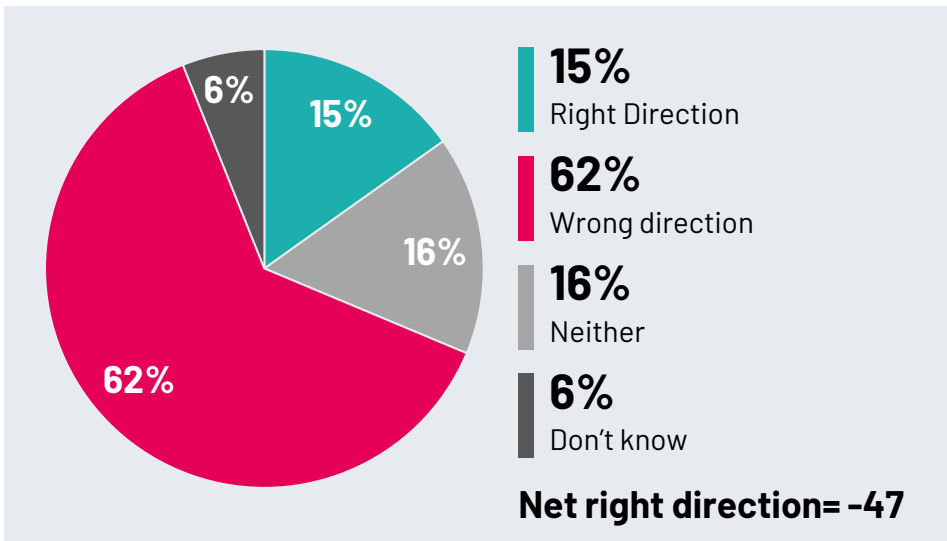
# THE PUBLIC MOOD



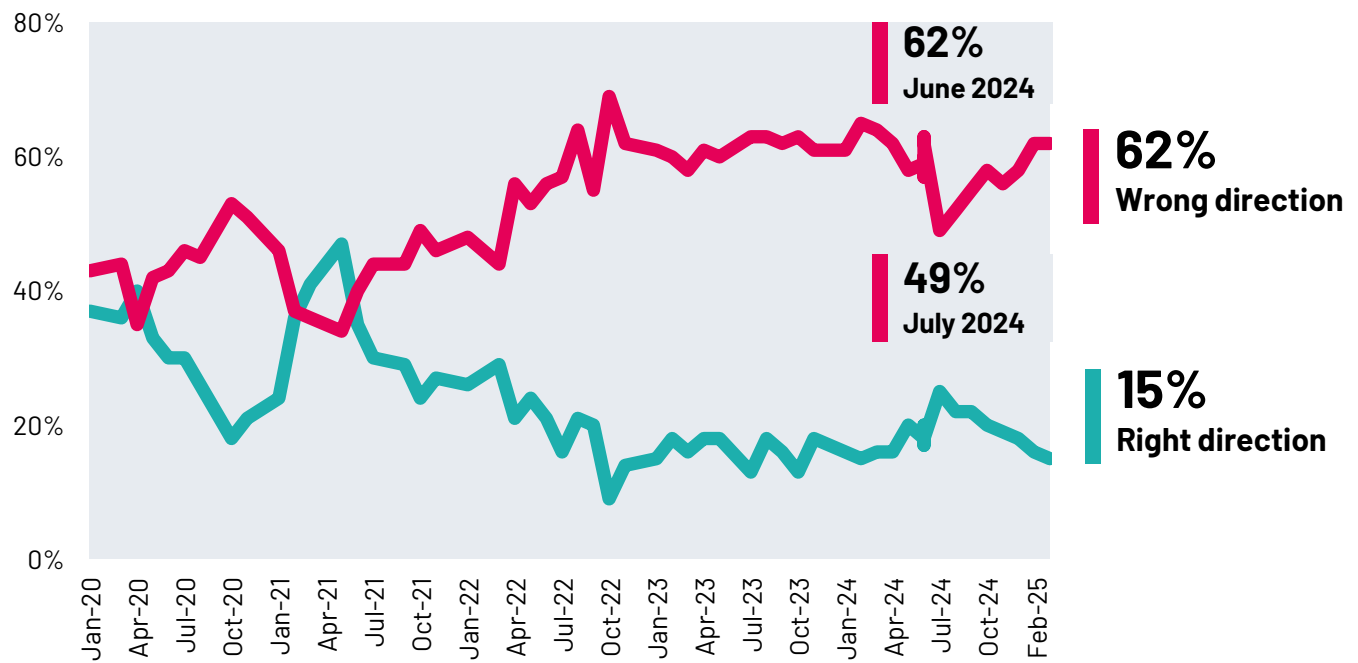
# The sun is out but no spring in Britons' step

Generally speaking, do you think things in Great Britain are heading in the right direction or wrong direction?

February 2025



January 2020 – February 2025

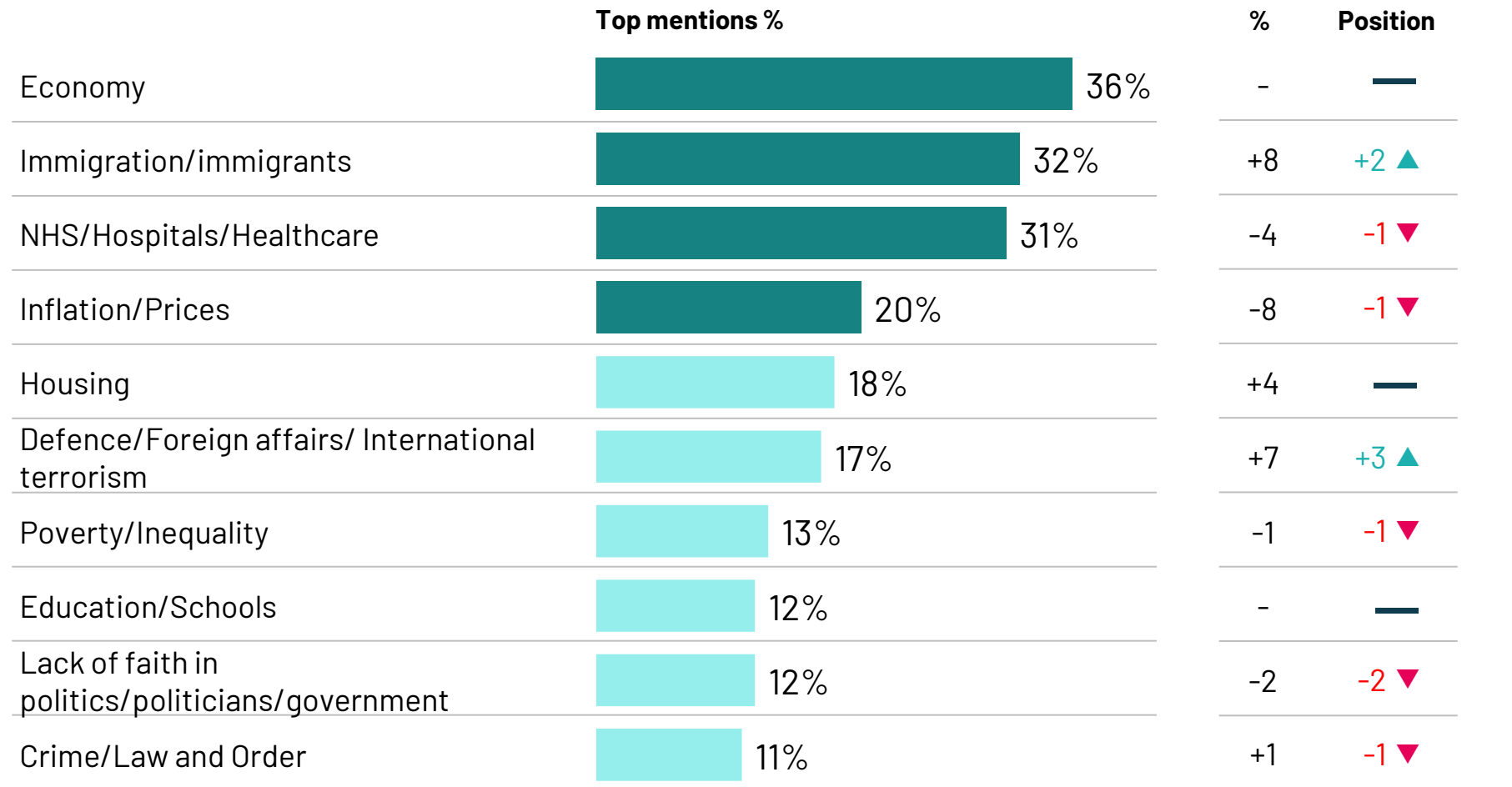


Base: 2,248 Online British adults aged 18+, 7- 11 February 2025



# The economy, cost of living, immigration and public services still dominate public concerns

What do you see as the most/other important issues facing Britain today?

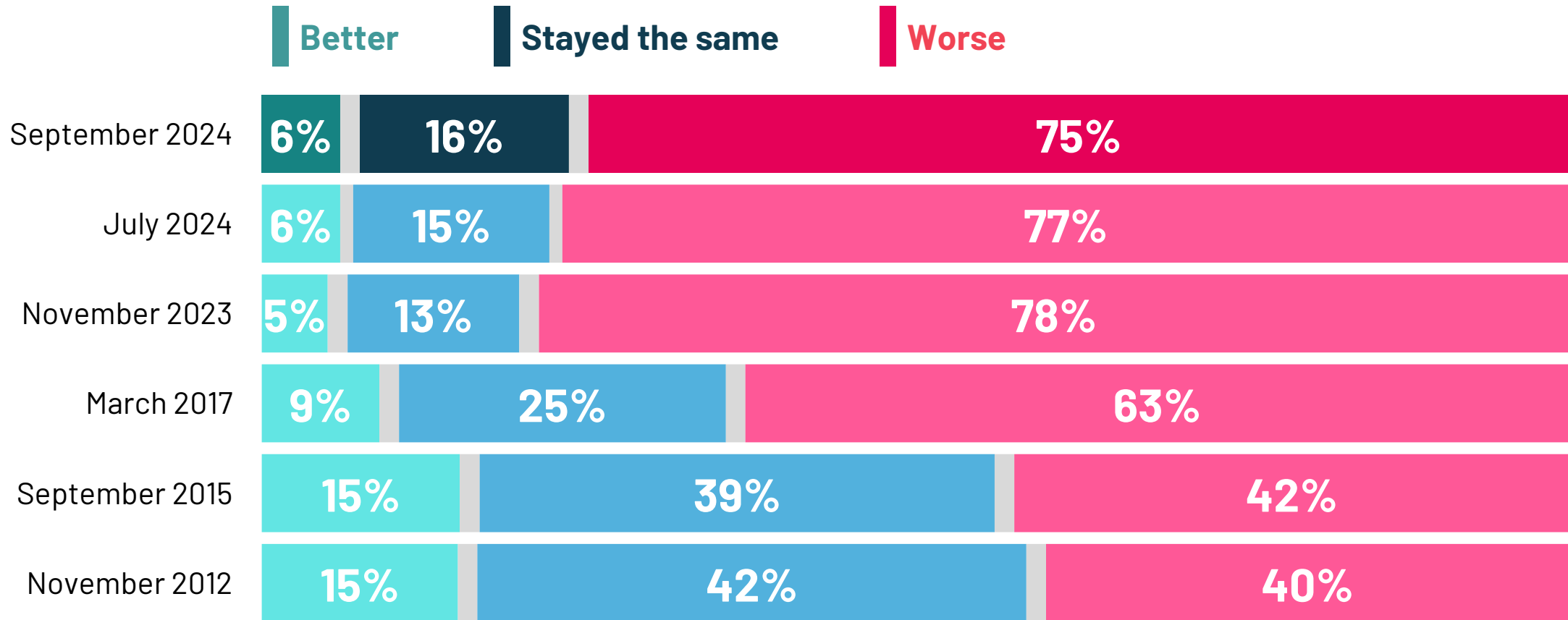


Base: 1,005 British adults 18+, 12 – 18 February 2025

Source: Ipsos Issues Index

# The crisis in confidence in public services shows no signs of improving

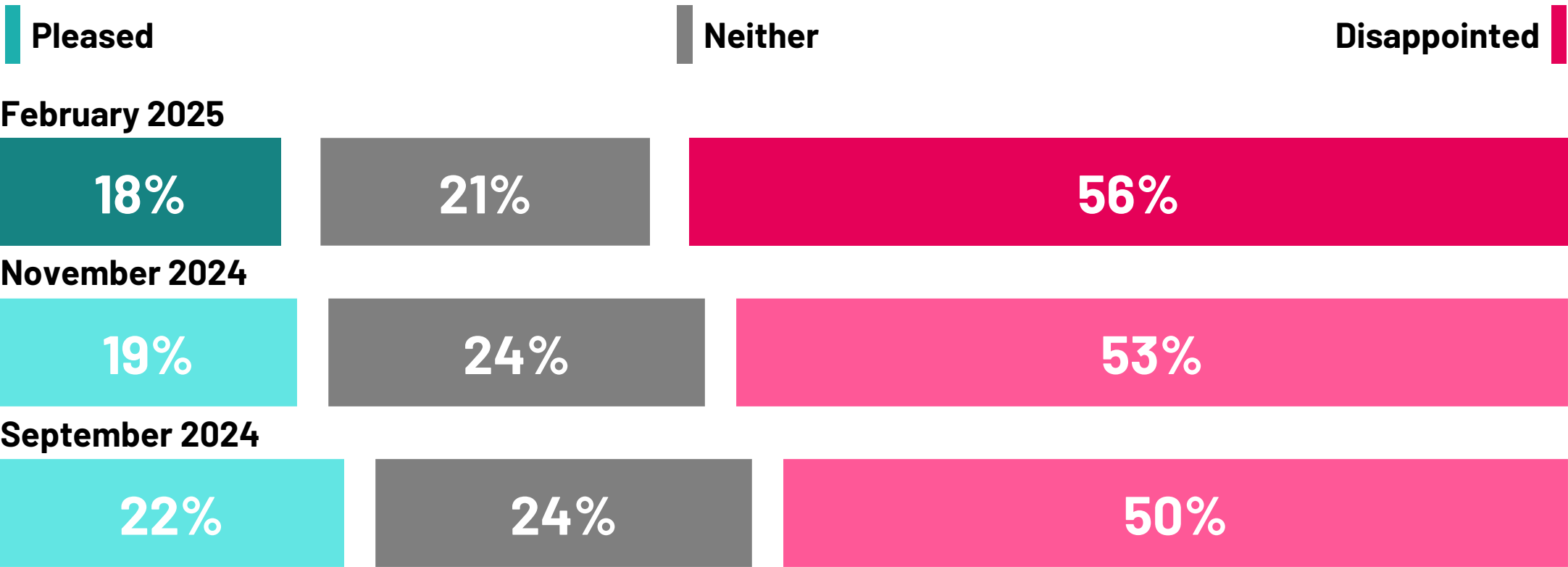
Thinking about public services overall, do you think the quality of public services has got better or worse in the last five years, or has it stayed the same?



Source: Ipsos UK KnowledgePanel, fieldwork 19-25 September 2024 Base: 20,835 UK adults aged 16+

# Over half of Britons are disappointed by what the Labour party have done in Government so far – including 3 in 10 of their own 2024 voters

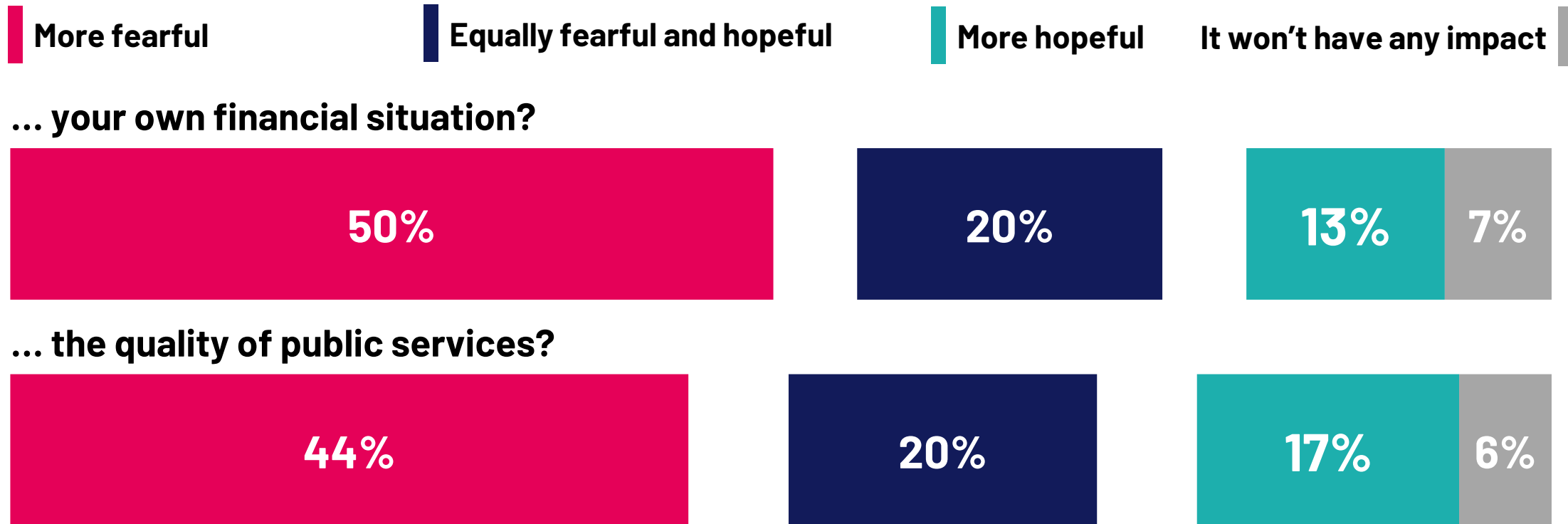
To what extent, if either, are you pleased or disappointed by what the Labour party have done in Government so far?



Base: 1,087 Online British adults aged 18-75, 3-5 February 2025

# And optimism for the upcoming Spring Statement is in short supply

As you may know, Chancellor Rachel Reeves will be announcing the Spring Statement get on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> October. To what extent, would you say you are hopeful or fearful of how announcements in the upcoming Spring Statement might impact...



Base: 1,087 Online British adults aged 18-75, 14-17 March 2025



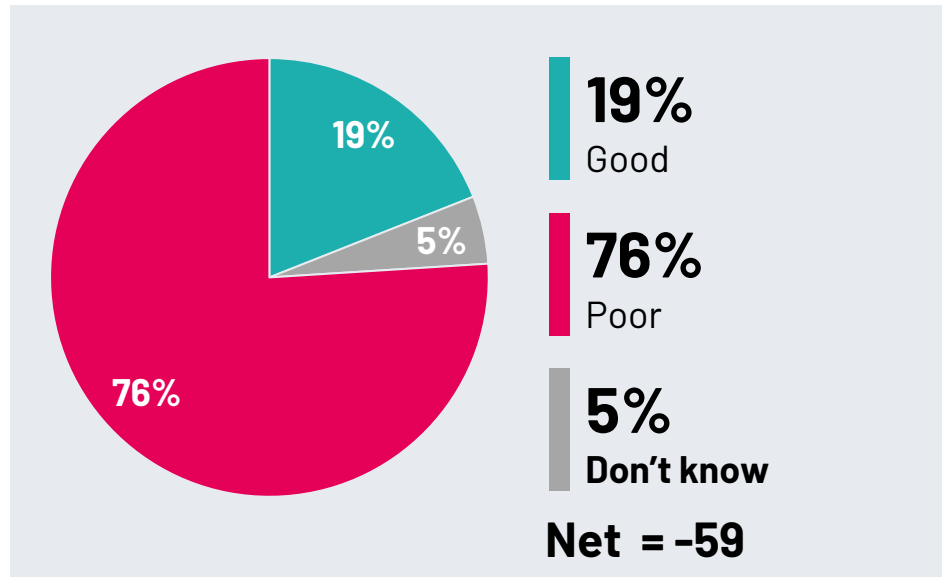
# The economics



# 3 in 4 think the economy is in a bad state....

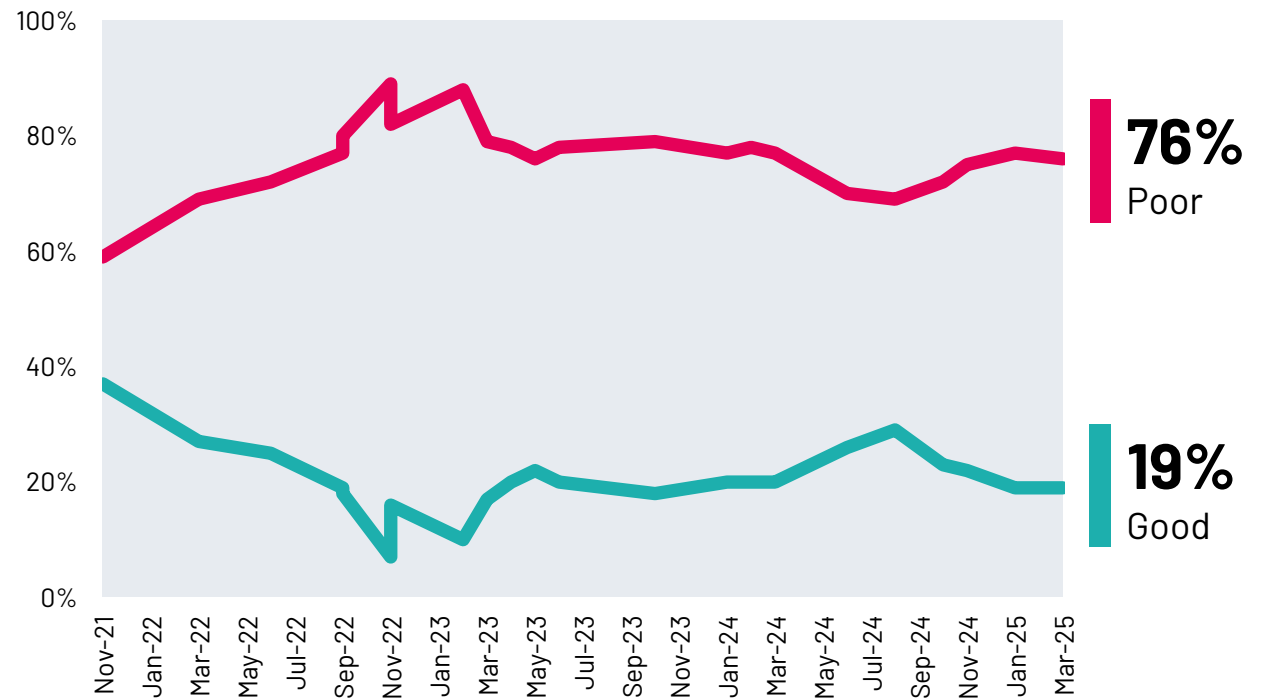
How would you describe the current state of the British economy? Would you say it is...?

March 2025



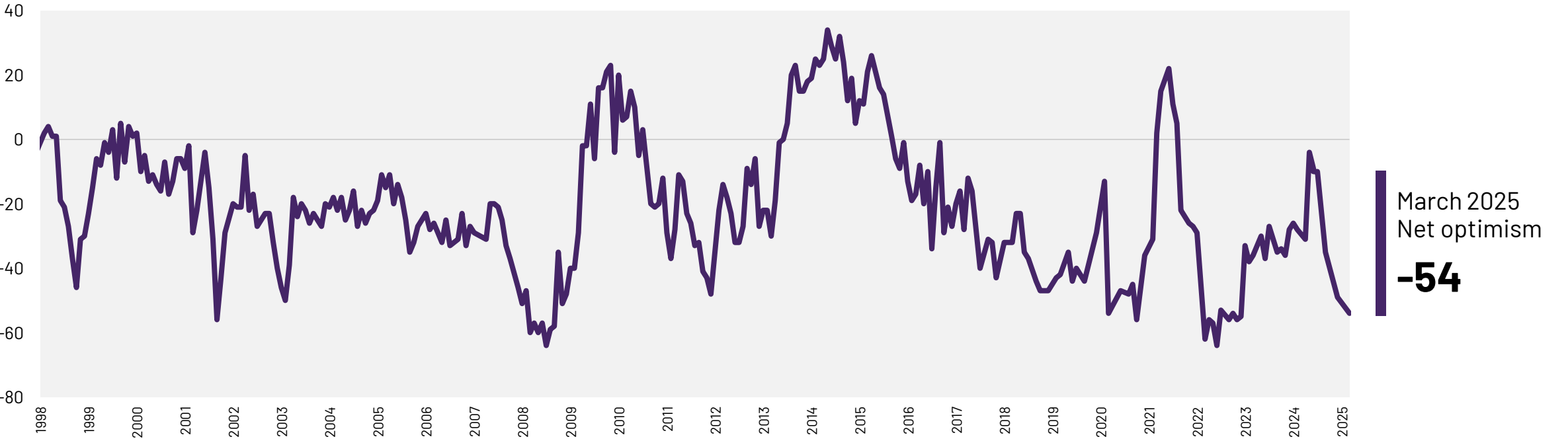
Base: 1,087 Online British adults aged 18-75, 14-17 March 2025

November 2021 – March 2025



# Ipsos Economic Optimism Index is at its lowest level since December 2022

Do you think that the general economic condition of the country will improve, stay the same or get worse over the next 12 months?



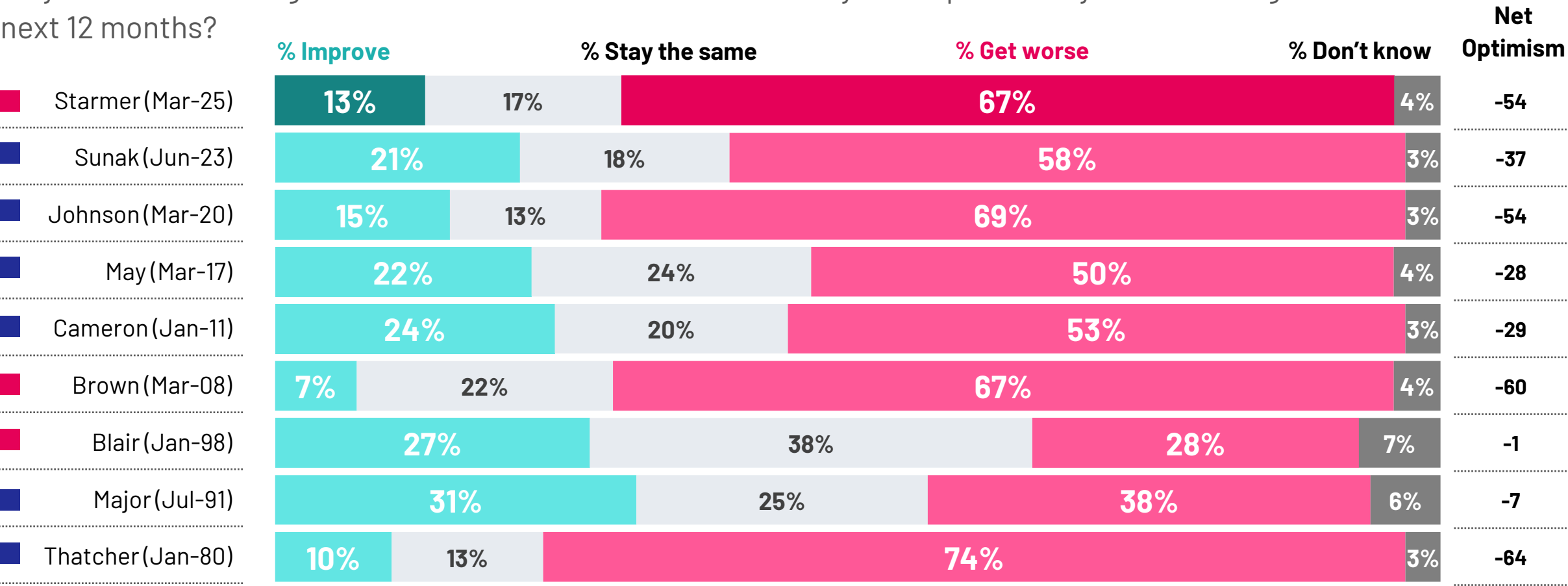
Base: c.1,000 British adults 18+ each month

Source: Ipsos Political Monitor



# Economic Optimism after 8 months: the historical comparisons aren't kind.....

Do you think that the general economic condition of the country will improve, stay the same or get worse over the next 12 months?



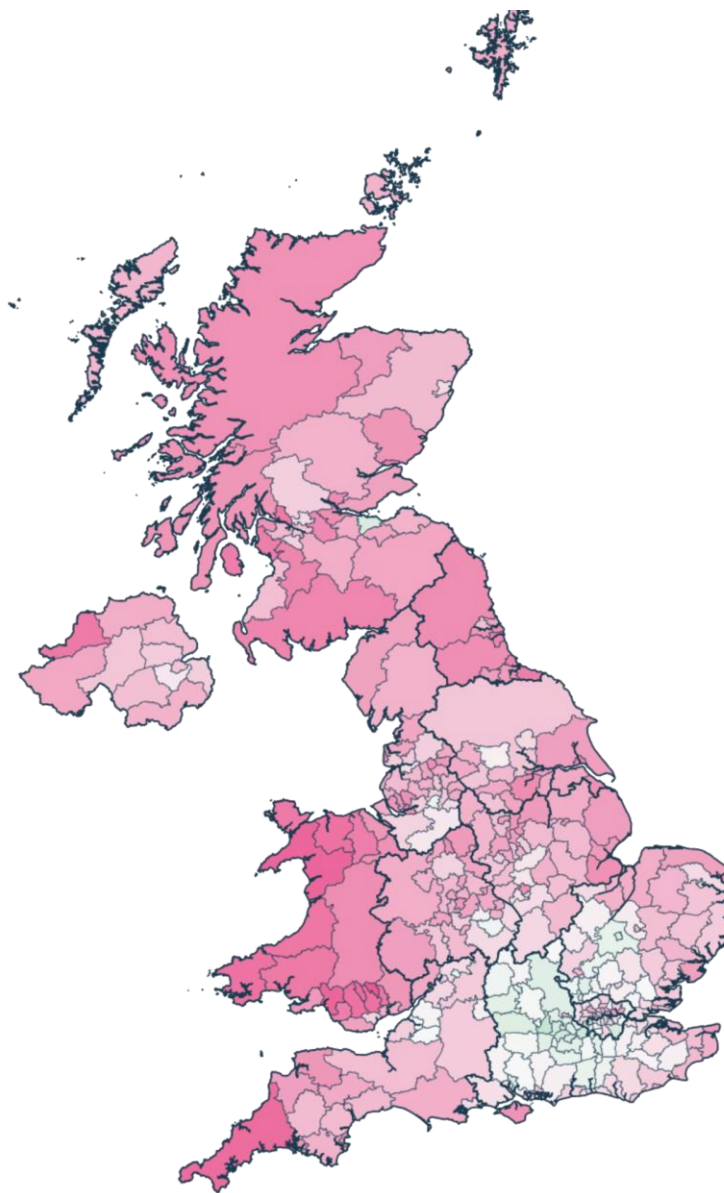
**Note:** Data collected prior to February 2008 was collected via face-to-face methodology; data collected from February 2008 was via telephone  
**Base:** c.1,000 British adults each month  
\* Data has been taken from the survey closest to 8 months after the leader became Prime Minister.

**Source:** Ipsos Political Monitor



# Clear geographical inequalities in access to good jobs – especially outside major cities, or where many are economically inactive due to long-term illness

Satisfaction with the availability of secure and well-paying jobs near to where you live



Net satisfaction  $\pm\%$



	Net satisfaction $\pm\%$
"Affluent England"	+6
South East	-2
University towns and cities	-7
London	-9
North East England	-34
Manufacturing & Mining Legacy	-36
Central/South Scotland	-37
Wales	-39
Remote Coastal	-39

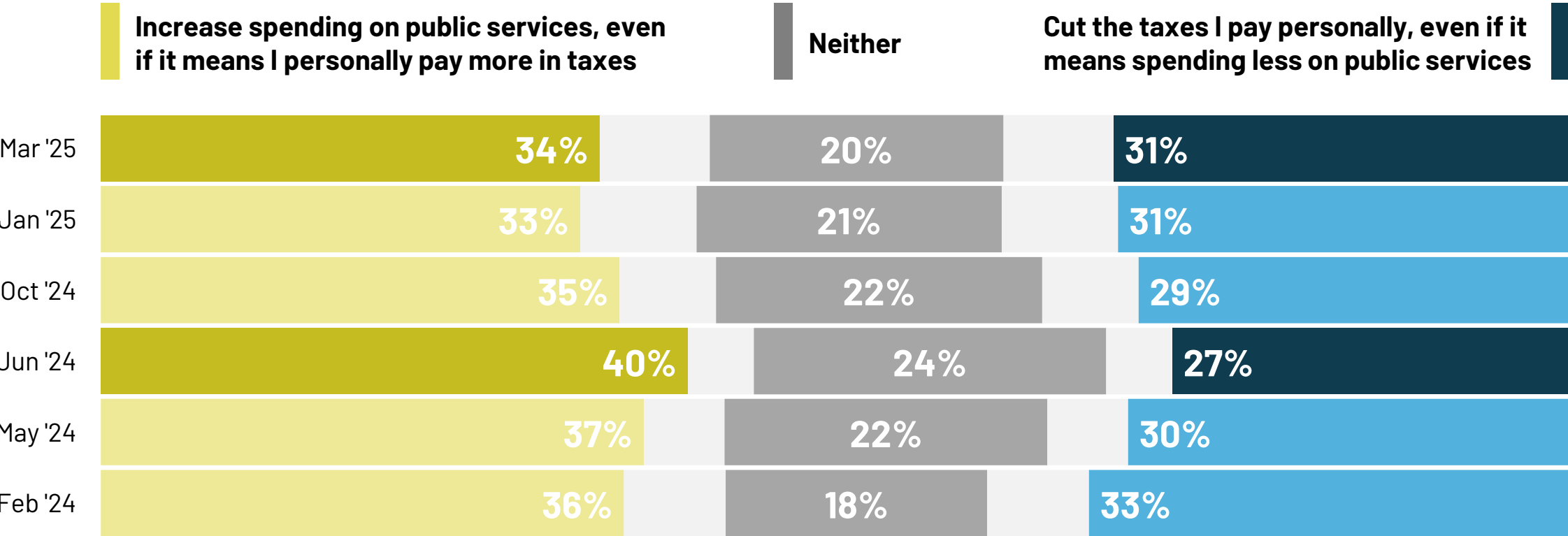
Source: Ipsos UK KnowledgePanel MRP model, fieldwork 19-25 September 2024 •  
Base: 20,835 UK adults aged 16+



# What are the Chancellor's options?

# Britons are split on their preferences on tax vs spend – preference for more spending is waning

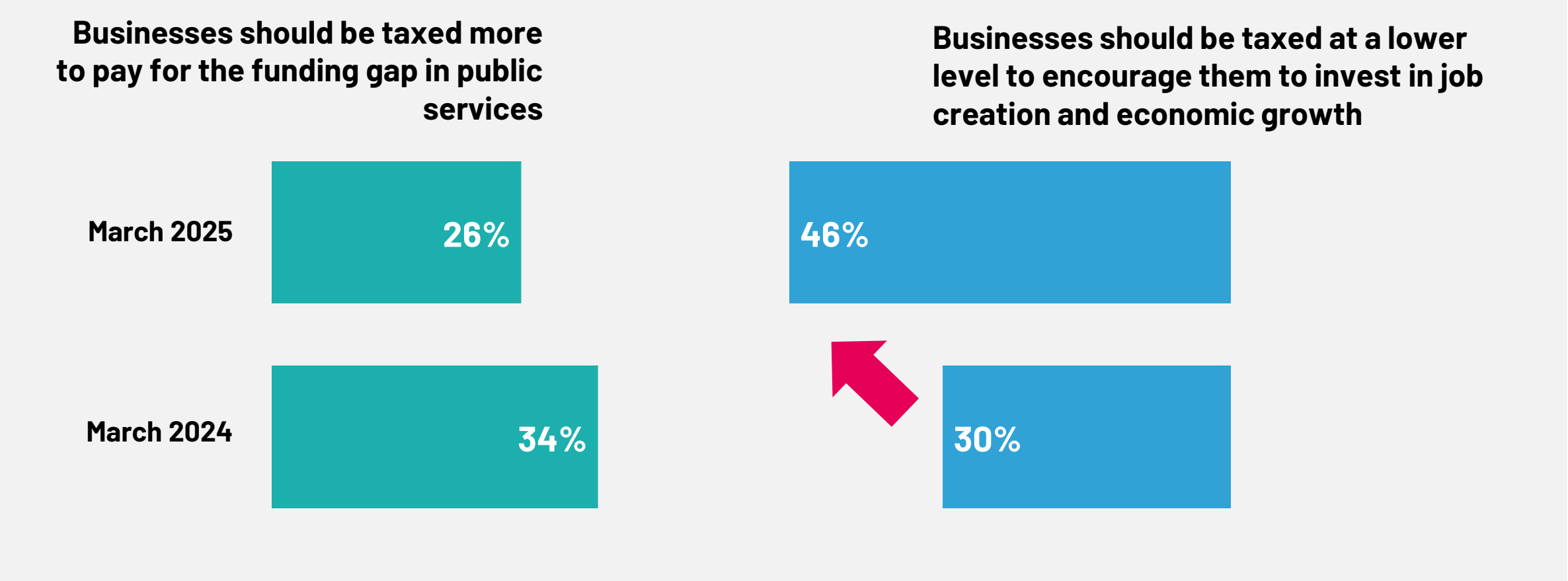
Imagine the Chancellor had the choice between cutting taxes for individuals, meaning you personally pay less tax even if it means spending less on public services, or spending more money on public services, even if it means you personally paying more in taxes. Which of the following would you prefer?



Base: 1,087 Online British adults aged 18-75, 14-17 March 2025

# In fact there's been a shift away from taxing business too since before the election

Which of the following statements, if either, do you agree with more?

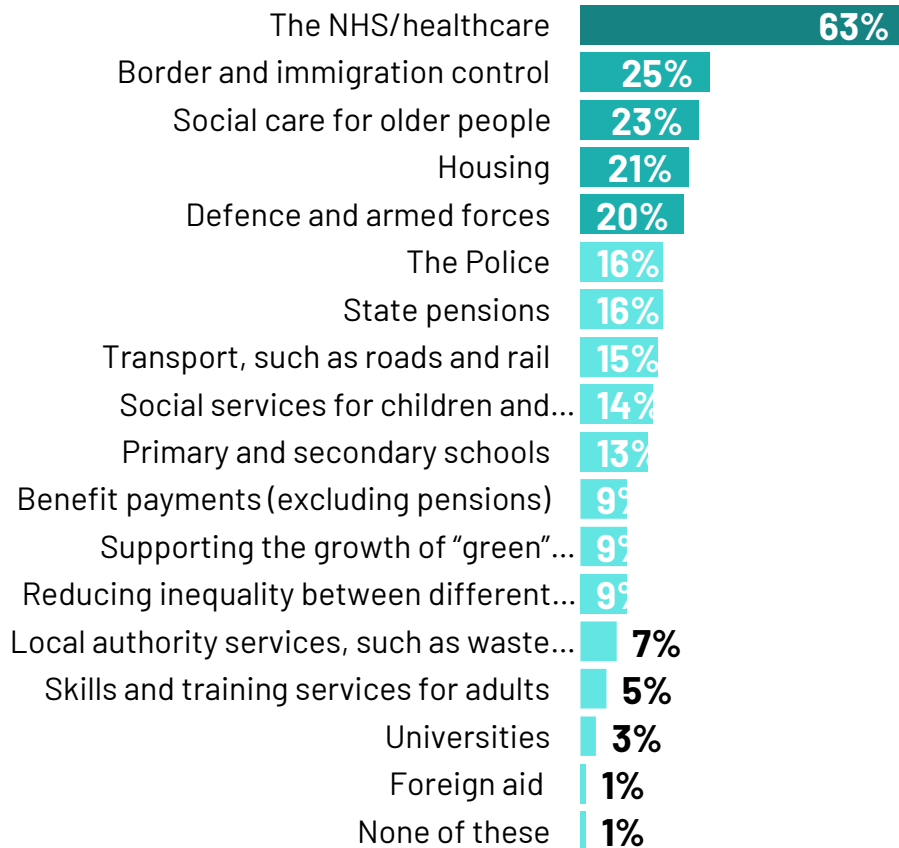


Base: 1,099 Online British adults aged 18+, 28 February – 3 March 2025

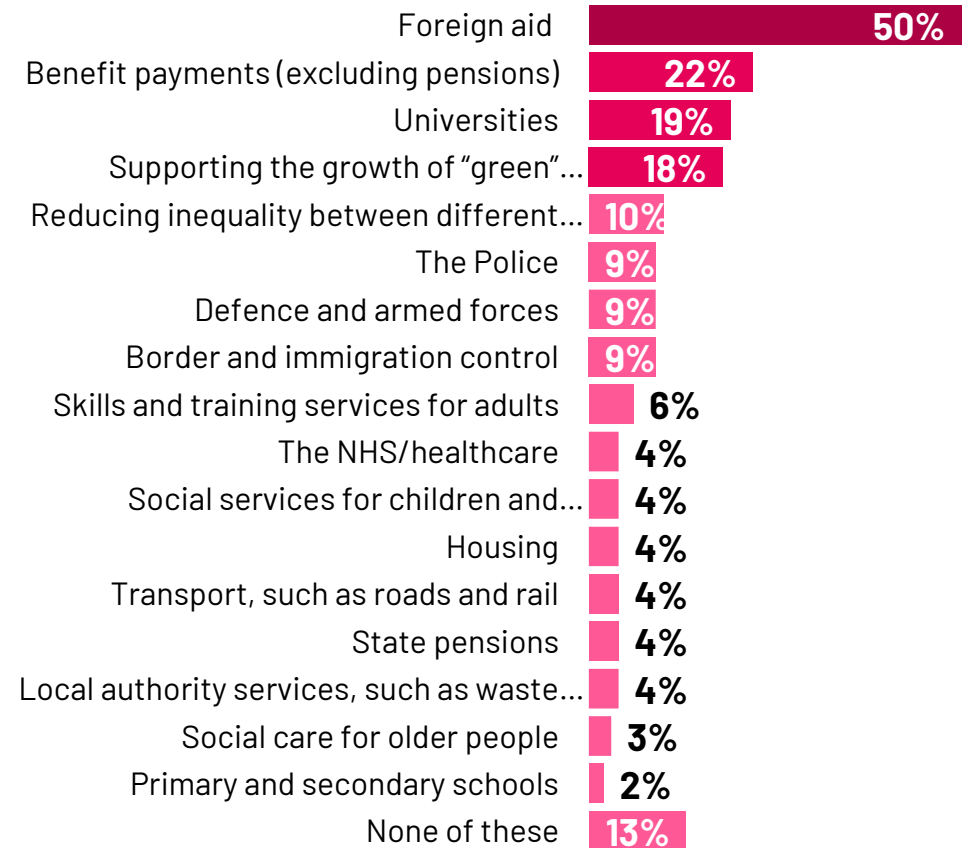
# The public continue to think that the NHS and healthcare most needs more public spending, while foreign aid would be their top choice to cut in the future

Which two or three, if any, of the following areas do you think should be prioritised to receive more/ less public spending in the future?

## Should receive more public spending



## Should receive less public spending



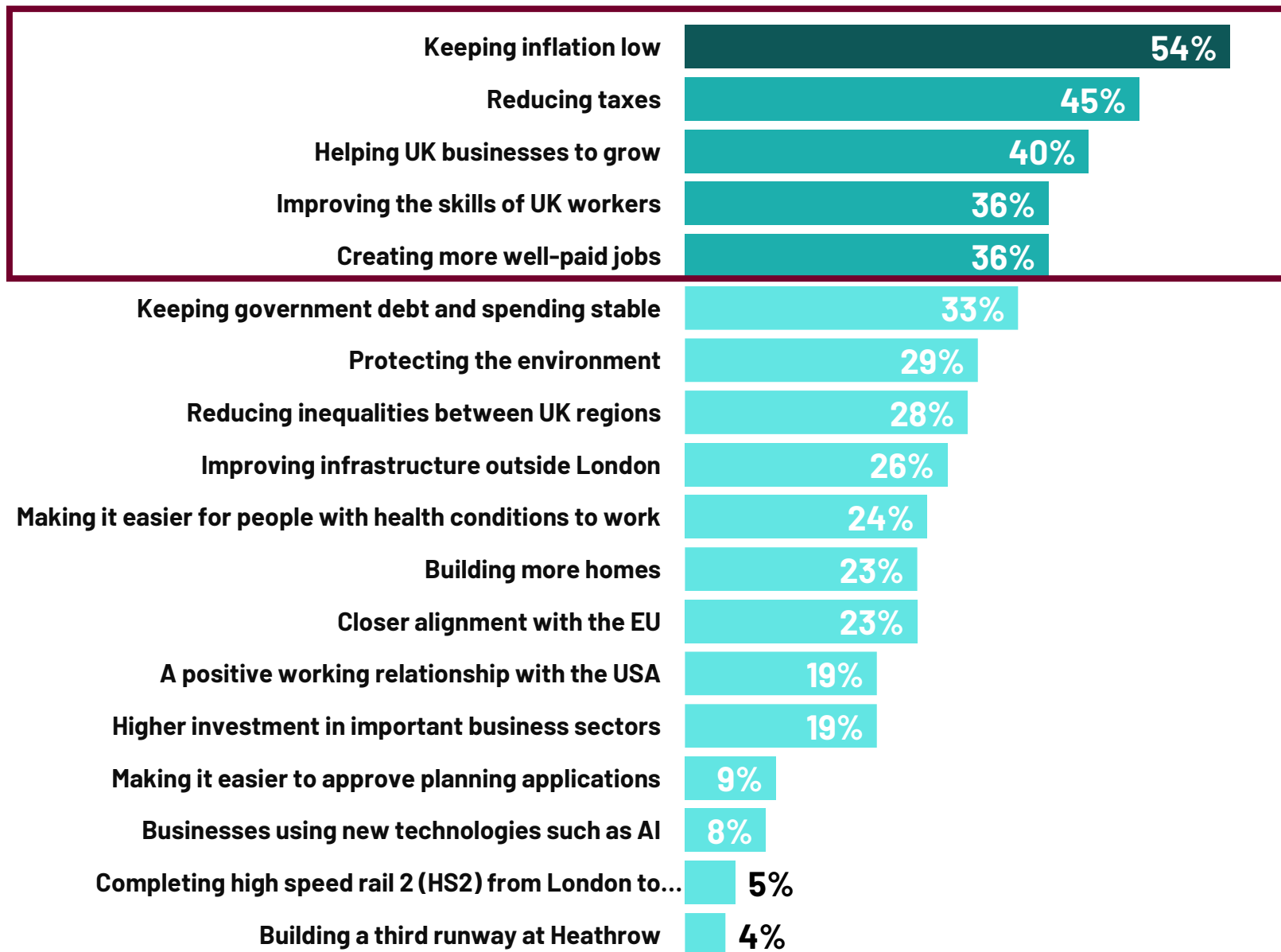
Base: 1,079 Online British adults 18-75, 21 - 24 February 2025

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# The public see low inflation, reducing taxes and business growth as most important for the economy.

Thinking about the following, which would you say are the most important for **growing the UK economy**? Please select all that apply.

Base: 1,099 Online British adults aged 18+, 28 February – 3 March 2025





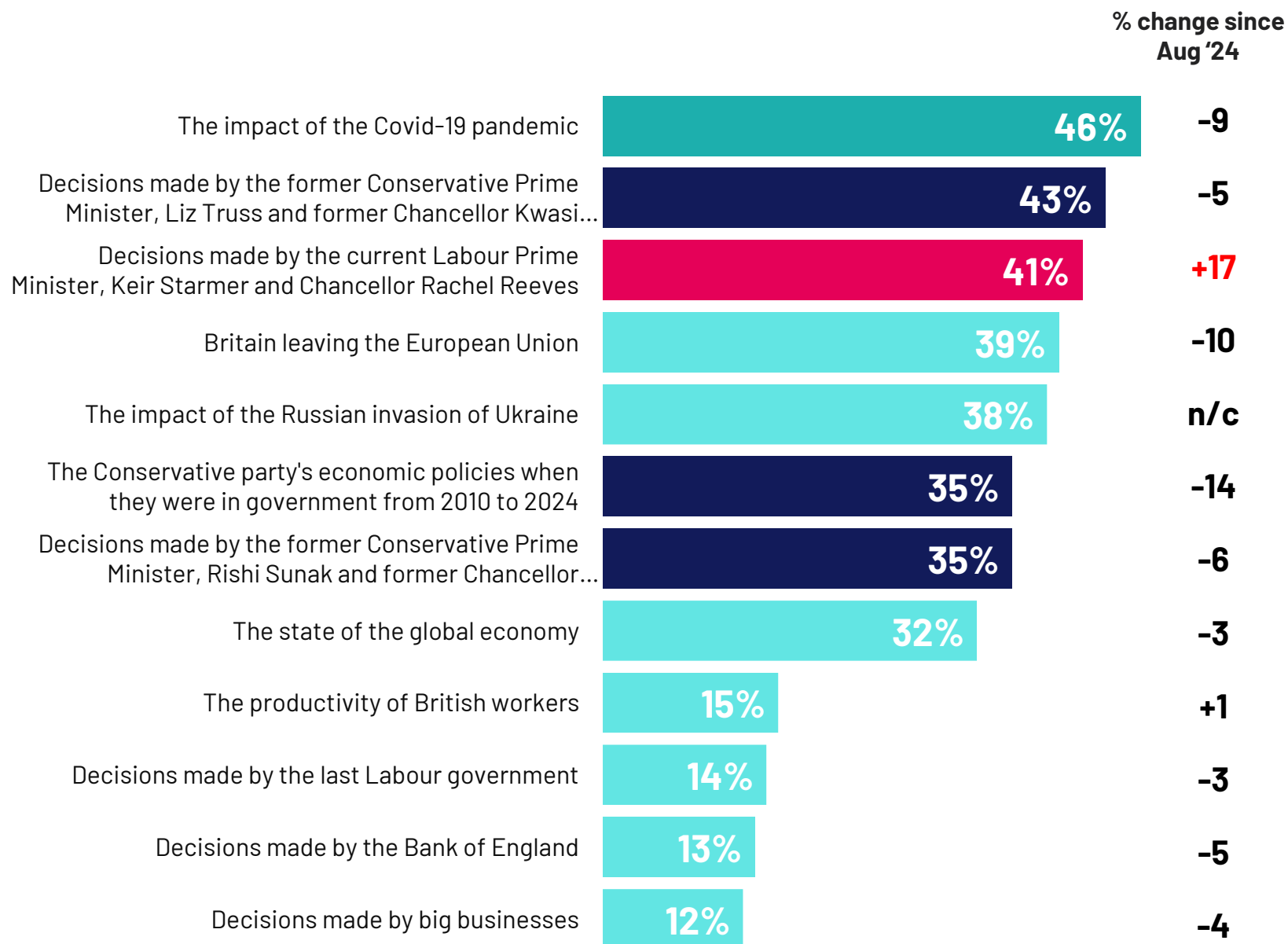
# The politics



# Focus on Labour – and blame for the poor state of the economy – is increasing

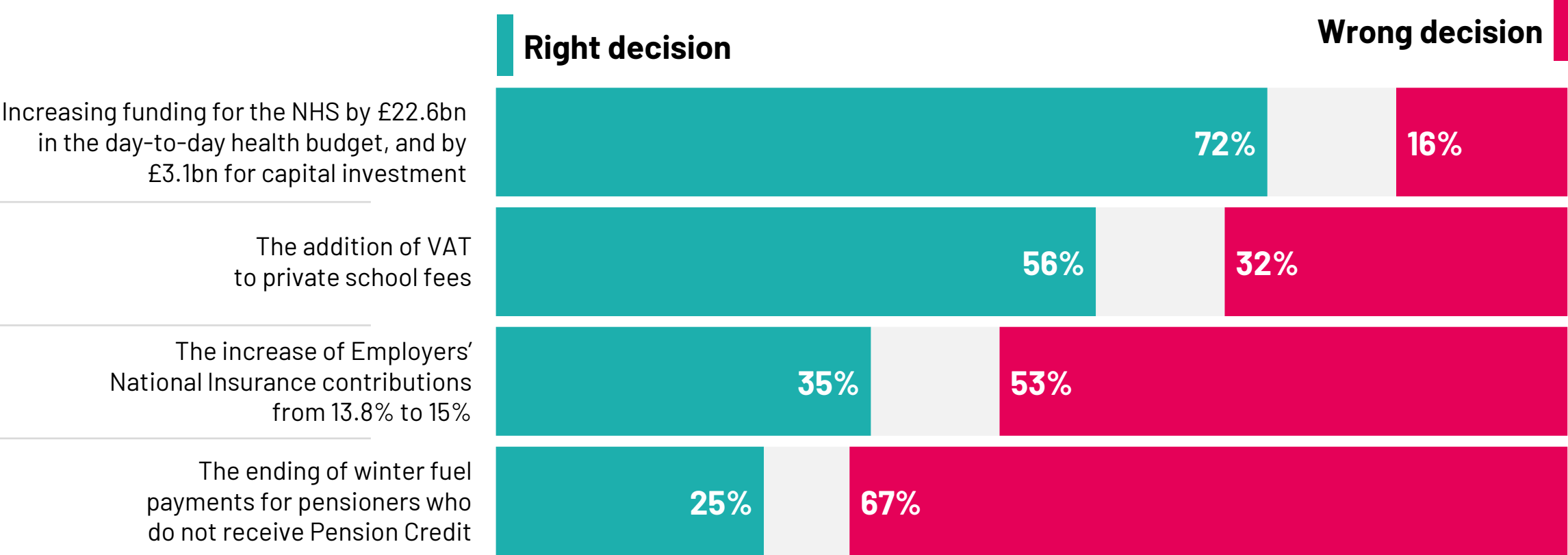
Which of the following, if any, would you say have contributed MOST to the British economy currently being in a POOR state? Please pick as many as apply.

**Base:** 808 Online British adults 18-75 who described the British economy as being in a poor state, 14-17 March 2025



# The public aren't critical of everything – spending on public services particularly welcomed – but worried about impact of tax rises and perceived unfairness in taking benefits from the vulnerable

Below is a list of policies that have been announced by the Labour government led by Keir Starmer. Do you think each of the following is the right decision or the wrong decision?



Base: 2,248 Online British adults aged 18+ 7-11 February 2025

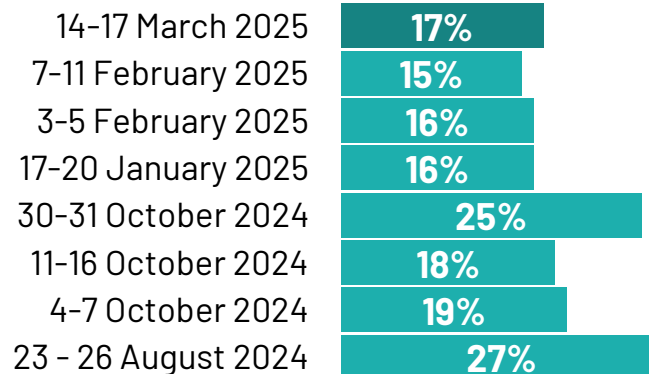
# Just over two in five British adults say Rachel Reeves is doing a bad job as Chancellor of the Exchequer

To what extent, if at all, do you think Rachel Reeves has been doing a good job or a bad job, in her role as Chancellor of the Exchequer?

Base: 1,087 Online British adults aged 18-75, 14-17 March 2025

## Good job

### Rachel Reeves



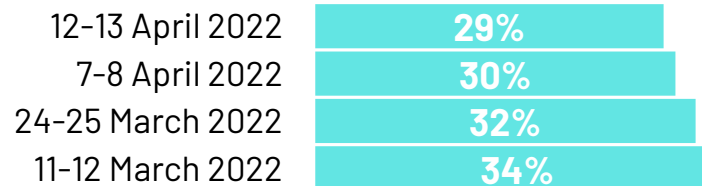
### Jeremy Hunt



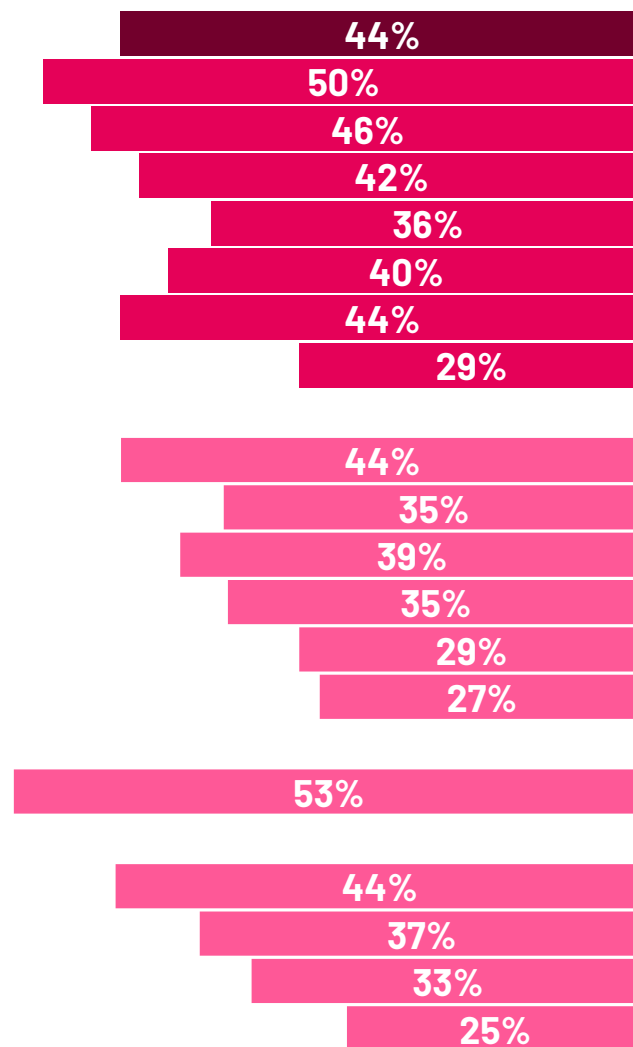
### Kwasi Kwarteng



### Rishi Sunak



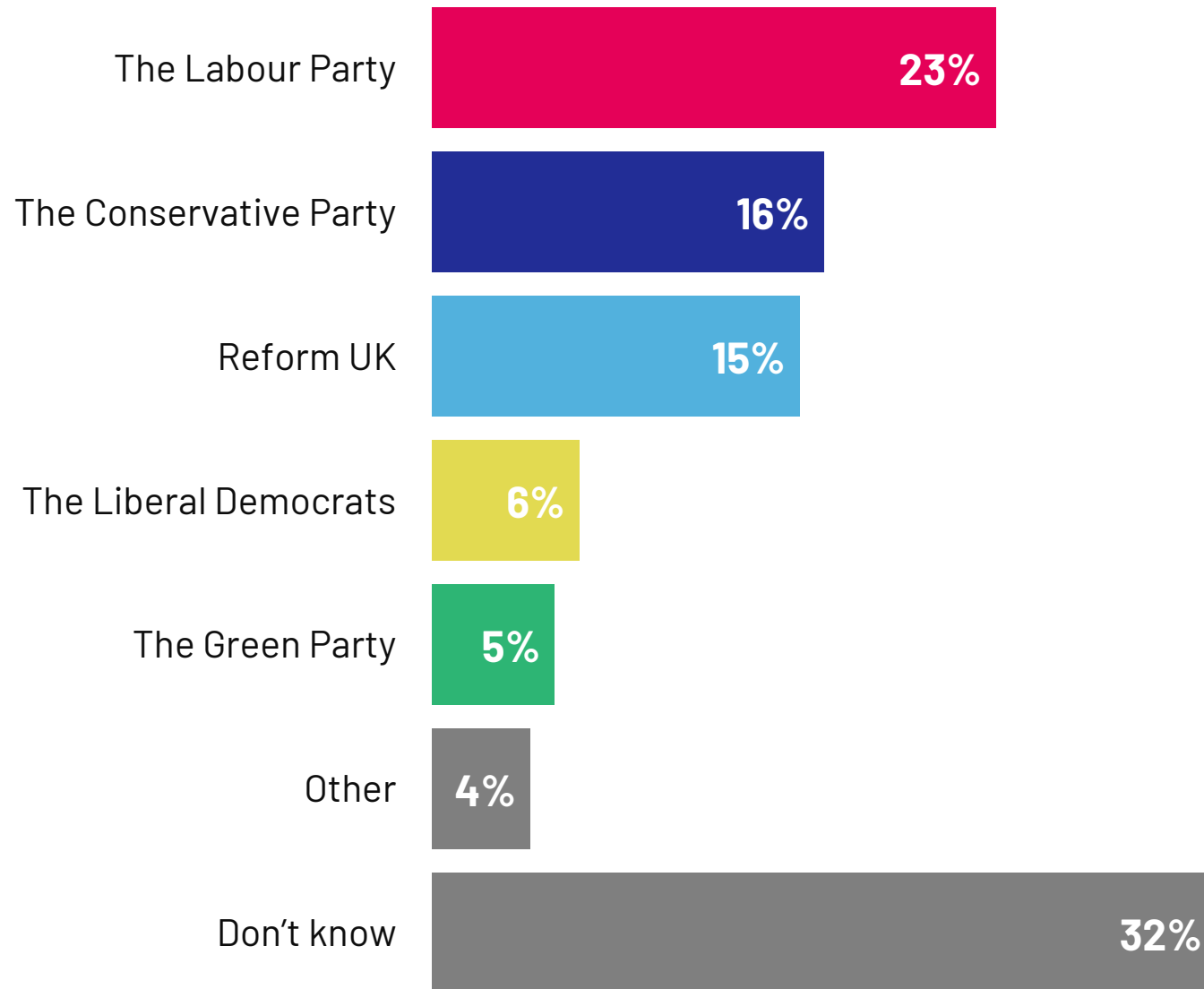
## Bad job



# Labour is still most trusted on the economy – but not by a very convincing margin

Which party, if any, do you trust most to manage Britain's economy?

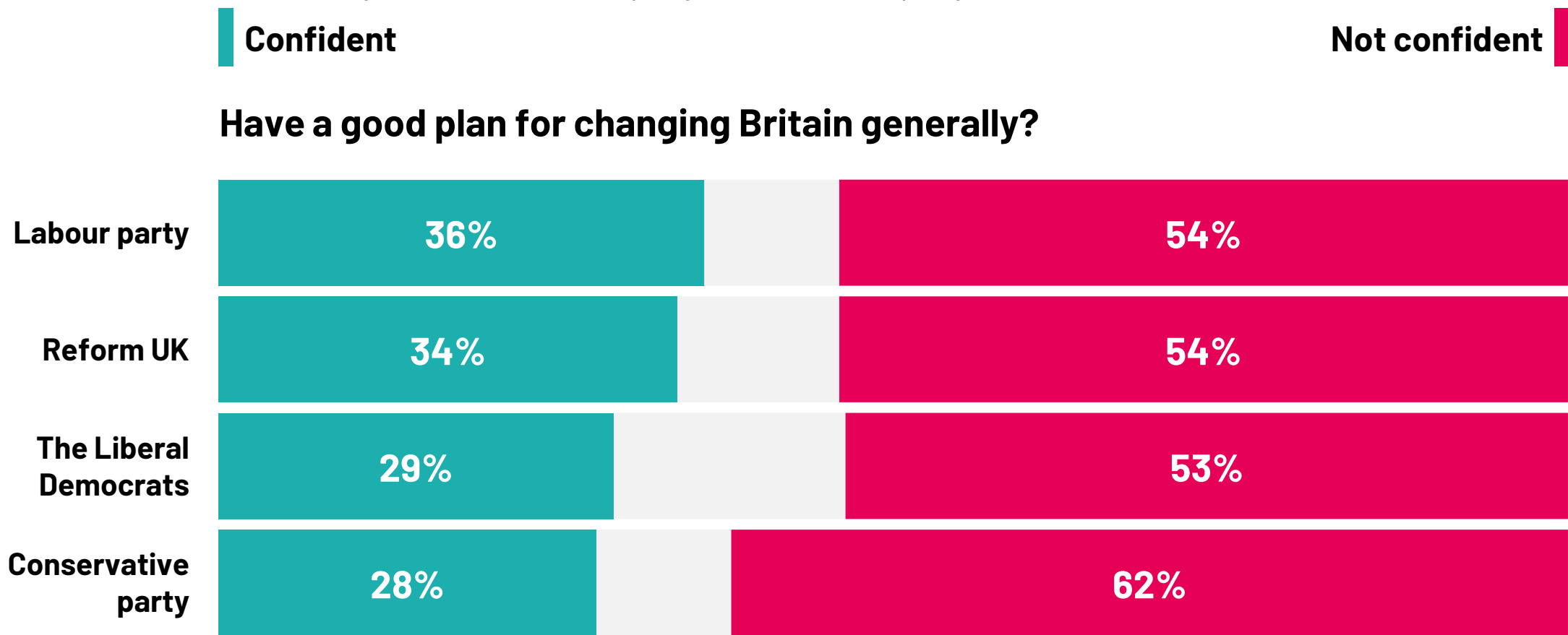
Base: 1,087 Online British adults aged 18-75, 14-17 March 2025





# Meanwhile Reform are catching up with Labour as the party of change.....

How confident, if at all, are you that the Labour party/ Conservative party/ Reform UK/ Liberal Democrats...



Base: 1,087 Online British adults aged 18-75, 14-17 March 2025

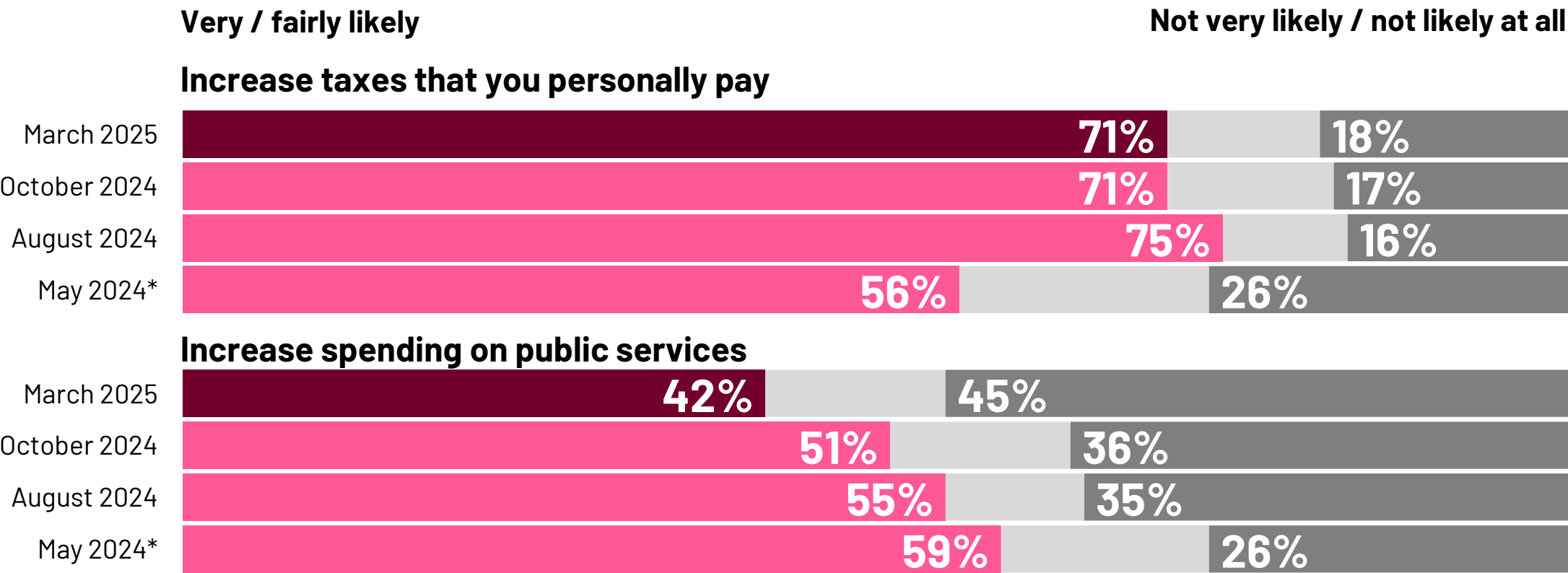
**Voters wanted  
change but  
aren't seeing it  
yet.**

**Labour needs  
to reset the  
narrative.....**



# Since the election campaign, belief that Labour would raise taxes is up – but belief in the quid pro quo of more spending on public services is down

How likely, if at all, do you think the Labour party will be to do each of the following over the next year?



Base: 1,087 Online British adults aged 18-75, 14-17 March 2025 . \*How likely, if at all, do you think the Labour party / Conservative party would be to do each of the following if they were to win the next election?



# MPs and public have different economic focus

Which two or three options on this list do you think would make the biggest improvement to Britain's economic growth over the next five years? Please select up to three.

## TOP 3 FOR LABOUR MPs

1. Making it easier to build **new national infrastructure projects** in Britain (72%)
2. **Getting closer to the EU** to make it easier for Britain to do business with member countries (51%)
3. **Improving public services** including the NHS (32%)

## TOP 3 FOR PUBLIC

1. **Improving public services** including the NHS (36%)
2. Supporting the creation of **jobs and job opportunities** (31%)
3. Improving **wages and rights** for workers (30%)

**Base:** 1,070 Online British adults aged 18-75, 1 - 5<sup>th</sup> November 2024

**Base:** 72 Labour MPs, 22<sup>nd</sup> July - 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024

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# Final thoughts

1

## **Public pessimism persists**

Brief honeymoon period not enough to overcome entrenched concerns across multiple policy areas – economy, cost of living, public services, immigration and more

2

## **Few good options for Reeves**

Mood against tax rises, but public services (esp NHS) remain a priority. Some headroom around benefits bill, overseas aid & taxes on rich, but public don't want those in genuine need to suffer

3

## **Labour losing goodwill, but can others take advantage?**

Historically weak ratings for a new government – though Conservatives even weaker. Reform can threaten if they take on the mantle of change

4

## **Delivery key, but needs a narrative that engages public.**

Still time to turn it around, and public recognise the problems. But Labour need to show how their decisions will lead to tangible improvements on public priorities.





# Lucy Fisher

Whitehall Editor, Financial Times

# Q&A

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Ipsos is the leader in social research, evaluation and strategy. Our Public Affairs experts bridge the gap between government and the public, providing robust research and analysis, directly supporting policy development.

We cover broad issues that shape the delivery of public services in modern society and how to engage the public in the policy-making process.

We are a team of more than 300 social research, evaluation and policy specialists, each offering expertise in a particular part of the public sector, ensuring we have a detailed understanding of specific sectors and policy challenges.

This, combined with our methodological and communications expertise, ensures that our research makes a difference for decision makers and communities, driving better policy and practice.

The challenges facing the UK, and the ambition of the new Government demands a broad research and evidence toolkit. Beyond data collection, we pride ourselves in our ability to translate insights into actions. Overleaf, we provide an overview of the essential tools for maximizing mission impact.

# How can research and evidence support public services and policy making?

Deliberative Research	Strategy and Advisory	Behavioural Science	Evaluation	Communications Research	Trends and Foresight
<p>Deliberative research, dialogue and public engagement <b>bring the public voice into decision making.</b></p> <p>From Citizens Assemblies, to Public Dialogue, deliberation and public engagement are critical tools for finding solutions to complex knotty problems that involve informed trade-offs and require people-centred change.</p>	<p>We support policy makers to <b>develop strategies and policies that deliver for citizens.</b></p> <p>Our team of former Civil Servants work with policymakers to co-design strategies and policies, bringing to bear Ipsos' deep understanding of 'what works' and citizens experience on policy.</p>	<p>The application of behavioural science helps <b>create positive individual, organisational and societal change.</b></p> <p>Our research and consultancy helps define, diagnose, design and evaluate the opportunities for behaviour change interventions that will help achieve new policy aims.</p>	<p>Policy and programme evaluation helps <b>demonstrate impact and identify opportunities for learning</b> and should be a key part of any new programme delivery.</p> <p>As the leading provider of evaluation services to UK central government and agencies, we support clients with economic, process and impact evaluations.</p>	<p>Effective public communications are a critical tool for driving positive social change.</p> <p>Our dedicated communications research specialists help public sector organisations with their strategic planning, testing, monitoring and evaluation, assisting them in their work to <b>inform and engage the public successfully.</b></p>	<p>Foresight done right, and activated, is empowering. It helps <b>focus attention on what can be changed now for a better tomorrow.</b></p> <p>Our Trends and Foresight experts integrate data, insight and frameworks to understand macro forces, shifts in society, markets, and people, and signals of the future.</p>
<p><b>Contact:</b> <a href="#">Michelle Mackie</a></p>	<p><b>Contact:</b> <a href="#">Nathan Bransden</a></p>	<p><b>Contact:</b> <a href="#">Steven Ginnis</a></p>	<p><b>Contact:</b> <a href="#">Chris Hale</a></p>	<p><b>Contact:</b> <a href="#">Bridget Williams</a></p>	<p><b>Contact:</b> <a href="#">Michael Clemence</a></p>



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